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Blueprint 2000 Student Performance Standards: What Variables Correlate with Teacher Perceptions of Goal 3?

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ABSTRACT. Many previous educational reform efforts have ultimately failed to meet initial expectations. One critical factor, easily over-looked in the reform process, is teacher attitude. Using attitude theory and research on teacher attitudes, instruments were developed to measure teacher attitudes toward the Blueprint 2000 student performance standards and student assessment procedures. A sample of 138 teachers completed a survey measuring attitudes toward Goal 3 standards and type of assessment. Teachers rated the standards as being important instructional objectives, and a moderate correlation between attitude toward performance based assessment and attitude toward Goal 3 standards was observed. Implications are discussed.

Educational literature documents many examples of well-intentioned reform initiatives, implemented as "top-down" directives, using "best practices", that eventually failed to achieve initial expectations (McCollum, 1994). The change process has been analyzed in numerous ways. One element in the educational reform process that might be overlooked is teacher attitude. Researchers have shown the importance of teacher attitude in the dynamics of educational reform, and number of studies identify teacher attitude as a key component in successful reform initiatives (Kimpston, 1985; Griswold, 1988; Harvey & McGovern, 1985; and Jett & Schafer, 1993). Perhaps teachers with favorable attitudes are more receptive to training. If so, using information on teacher attitude could assist in directing current reform efforts.

In 1994 the Goals 2000: Educate America Act became national law. This educational reform initiative, broad and ambitious in design is intended to impact every school in the nation (America 2000, 1991; Goals 2000, 1994). Blueprint 2000 was adopted by the Florida legislature to implement Goals 2000 on a local level (Florida Commission, 1992). A study of initial secondary school improvement plans revealed that plans designed at the school level tended to reflect efforts to raise test scores and improve attendance rates in the absence of additional, substantial resources (Kushner, Carey, & Kromrey, 1995).

Alternative assessment, specifically performance based assessment, is closely linked with current educational reform initiatives (Linn, 1987). In 1991, a Committee on Educational Assessment was established by the Florida Commissioner of Education to study the state's current and developing educational assessment programs. The Committee's purpose was to describe assessment activities that are congruent with Florida's accountability program (Florida Committee on Educational Assessment, 1992). Alternative assessment techniques were considered because of their potential for: (1) addressing student knowledge directly, (2) incorporating tasks that provide an opportunity for students to use higher-order thinking skills, and (3) integrating knowledge learned in and out of the

school environment. Although the committee concluded that the complexity of using alternative assessments necessitated caution, they recommended implementing pilot projects that use portfolios, performance assessment tasks, projects, and demonstrations. This effort to develop performance based assessments is similar to other national and international efforts such as the New Standards Project (Learning Research and Development Center, 1991). It could be, with the importance of assessment to current reform, teacher attitudes toward assessment might serve as one indicator of the potential success of Blueprint 2000.

By design, teachers play a pivotal role in the implementation of Blueprint 2000 student performance objectives. Not only do many teachers serve on School Improvement Teams, which are responsible for developing and assessing school based goals, but they also serve as the change agent in incorporating classroom instruction and assessment changes. This is supported by existing evidence that successful school based change addresses what teachers do and think (Tollefson et al, 1985). Furthermore, the current state assessment system is designed to have more impact at the classroom level than previous systems (Florida Department of Education, 1994). Teacher attitude toward the standards and different assessment methods may well serve as one barometer of the potential success of current reform efforts. Teacher attitudes represent a potential source of information that could be used to facilitate reform efforts and assist in the development of training programs.

This evaluation is a context analysis study. The purpose is to describe teacher attitudes toward Blueprint 2000 student performance standards; norm-referenced achievement testing, and performance based assessment. The relationship between teacher attitude toward the performance standards and selected demographic and attitudinal variables is also investigated.

The following evaluation questions are addressed: (1) Do teachers consider the Blueprint 2000 student performance standards as important instructional objectives? (2) Do teachers value performance-based assessment? (3) Do teachers value norm-referenced achievement testing? (4) What is the relationship between selected demographic and attitudinal variables and teachers' attitude toward the student performance standards?

Literature Review

Attitude Theory. Triandis (1971) defines an attitude as "an idea charged with emotion which predisposes a class of actions to a particular class of social situations." Earlier, Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) delineated an attitude model consisting of three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. According to their model, a person categorizes an attitude object, for which an emotional response is associated, resulting in a predisposition to action.

One can infer a strong relationship among these three components from initial research (Rosenberg, 1956; Bagozzi, 1978); evidence to the contrary has also been produced (Gardner, Wonnacott, and Taylor, 1968). Other factors, such as normative beliefs, (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1973; Burnkrant and Page, 1988) have also been hypothesized as influencing the prediction of behaviors

based on attitude. Most researchers would probably agree that a more general cognitive theory acknowledging the influence of both internal and external cue information would be most functional for predicting behavior (Chaiken and Baldwin, 1981).

Teacher Attitude Theory. Researcher's early models depicting influences on teacher behavior gave little credibility to the role of attitudes (Munby, 1982). Ernest (1989) created a model defining the relationship among knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. The model relates specifically to mathematics, but offers insights into teacher attitudes in general. His model acknowledges the role of beliefs and attitudes, with attitudes defined as a teacher's personal reaction to educational experiences, compounded with other influences. Ernest suggests that a crucial factor in developing beliefs and attitudes through teacher training activities is the form, rather than the content of the learning experiences. An example of how this knowledge is often ignored is when preservice or inservice activities use a lecture format for presenting training in new and innovative instructional methodologies. Drawing on these findings a model depicting influences on teacher behavior is presented in Figure A.

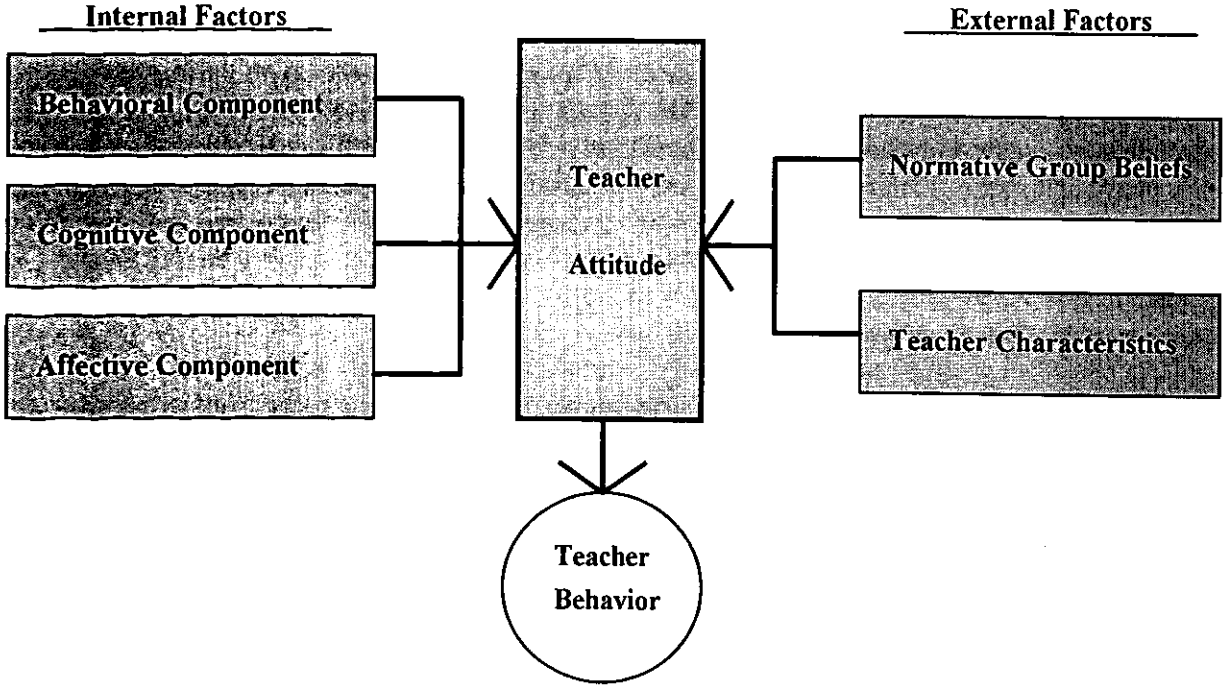

Figure A. Teacher Attitude Model

Teacher Attitude Toward Testing. In assessing teacher attitudes toward traditional testing practices, specifically, standardized achievement testing, results have been less than definitive. Some researchers have found teacher attitudes to be generally positive (Beck & Stetz, 1979; Dorr-Breme, 1983; and Jett & Scafer, 1993), while others find their attitudes to be negative (Green & Stager,

1984, 1986; Lambert, 1981; Lissitz & Schafer, 1987). Regarding testing behavior, there is some evidence that teacher attitude toward testing practices can be used to predict actual testing practices (Monsaas & Englehard, 1991) and that, attitude, along with training and experience, are important factors related to test use (Lazar-Morrison, 1980). Monsaas (1991), using a model representing attitudes and subjective norms as predictors of behavior, accounted for forty-two percent of the variance in teacher testing practices.

Teacher Attitude Correlates. Studies aimed at identifying teacher characteristics associated with specific teacher attitudes have provided interesting results. Related to attitude toward standardized achievement testing, teachers with more classroom experience tend to be more positive than inexperienced teachers (Yeh, 1978). Furthermore, teacher attitudes toward standardized testing are a function of grade level assignment, i.e., teachers at higher grades are more positive (Green & Stager, 1986; Tollefson et al., 1985). In contrast, these latter two studies report conflicting findings about the relationship between formal measurement training and positive testing attitudes. In surveying teacher attitudes toward the Blueprint 2000 standards, Hall and Tremmel (1995) found the greatest support for the standards among elementary teachers and teachers with less teaching experience.

In summary, the following assumptions are offered: (1) attitude can be conceptualized as multidimensional, with internal and external factors influencing predicted behavior; (2) teacher attitude is a key factor in the success of educational reform efforts; (3) teacher attitude can be used in a prediction model of future behaviors; and (4) certain teacher characteristics may be associated with outcome variables such as attitudes toward traditional testing practices or current educational reform. These assumptions provide the basis for an initial exploration into teacher characteristics that are associated with positive attitudes toward Blueprint 2000 student performance standards, a key element in the Florida reform initiative.

Method

Instrumentation/ Alpha Studies. Measures for three different attitudes were developed: attitude toward standardized achievement testing, attitude toward performance-based assessment, and attitude toward the Blueprint 2000 Goal 3 student performance standards. Initial forms of the three scales contained items representing affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. Validation evidence was gathered through pilot studies and field tests.

Attitude Toward Standardized Achievement Testing. To measure a respondent's perception of the usefulness of standardized achievement test data, items based on previous research and current practice were developed using a Likert-style scale. Responses were categorized on a 5 point scale ranging from "Strongly agree " to Strongly disagree". Individual items represented the three attitudinal components, with most classified as behavioral and cognitive.

A stratified random sample of 95 teachers from a medium-sized Florida school district completed the original 44 item form. Data analysis based on item-remainder correlations produced 12 items that demonstrated internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) in measuring the construct (r=.95). Item-remainder coefficients ranged from .63 to .84.

Attitude Toward Performance Based Assessment. Similar procedures were used to develop a measure of teachers' attitude toward the usefulness of information derived from performance-based assessment. Items were generated and formatted with the same Likert-style scale. As with the previous measure, most items represented the behavioral and cognitive attitude components.

Teachers from the same school district were randomly selected. In addition, a group of students in an undergraduate measurement course was also randomly selected. A total of 108 teachers and teacher candidates completed the 30 item scale. Analysis revealed 10 items that demonstrated internal consistency, (Cronbach's alpha, r=.94). Item-reminder coefficients ranged from .62 to .95.

Attitude Toward Blueprint 2000 Student Performance Standards. Blueprint 2000 Goal 3 states that, "Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful, and healthy lifelong decisions", and standards were developed to measure progress toward meeting this goal. To develop an attitudinal measure, teacher perception of the importance of each of the individual standards was determined by having them rate each standard using a 5 point scale: not important (1); somewhat important; important; very important; and extremely important - essential (5).

A pilot sample was chosen by selecting two schools from each organizational level (elementary, middle, and high school) in another medium size school district. A total of 210 teachers completed the survey. On the 5-point scale, individual standard - mean ratings ranged from 3.82 to 4.43. Responses to the individual standards were collapsed to provide an overall estimate of attitude toward the student performance goal. This resulted in a distribution that was negatively skewed, i.e., most responses were in the upper range of the scale.

Procedures. The version of the instrument used for this study incorporated the three attitudinal measures described, along with several demographic items. Some demographic variables were chosen based on previous research findings that suggest an association between the student performance attitude variable and teaching level (Hall & Tremmel, 1995); teaching experience (Hall & Tremmel, 1995) and measurement courses completed. Other variables were studied based on expected association with the standards attitude variable. School Improvement Team membership was included because a higher level of participation in reform efforts would be expected to be associated with positive attitudes toward the reform. Recertification method was also studied on the premise that teachers recertifying through university courses would be more likely to be exposed to recent reform methodology and thus, more favorable to reform, than teachers earning inservice points through their

local school district. The practice of using the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards was chosen as a variable since it would be expected that users of those reform efforts would also be favorable to the Blueprint 2000 reform initiative.

Data Collection. The sampling plan reflected a purposive design, with 4 schools chosen on the basis of organizational level and geographic location (2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school). Each teacher received the instrument as well as a sample of a performance-based assessment prompt. Responses were anonymous.

Results

Respondents. Of the 234 surveys distributed, 138 were returned for an overall response rate of 59%. Broken down by organizational level, the number and response rate were as follows: elementary 78 (80%); middle school 31 (54%); and high school 27 (30%). This represents a high response rate among elementary teachers and a moderate to low rate for secondary teachers. Of the total number of respondents, 57% were at the elementary level, 23% were at the middle school level, and 20% were at the high school level. This distribution approximates the proportional representation of teachers district wide. In terms of experience, 57% had 10 years or more experience, 18% had at least 6 years of teaching experience, and only 5% had 1 year or less experience. Seventy-nine percent reported taking at least 2 college courses in measurement and testing. Thirty-seven percent had served on School Improvement Teams. Sixty-four percent recertified through inservice points. Thirty-eight percent reported using the NCTM standards, while over 50% indicated that these standards did not apply to their situation. The sampling design did not follow a classical random format; consequently, caution must be exercised in generalizing findings.

Ratings of the Student Performance Standards. Analysis of the respondents' rating of the Blueprint 2000 Goal 3 standards clearly shows that teachers consider the standards to be important educational objectives. On a 5-point scale, mean ratings of the standards ranged from 3.9 to 4.5. T-test results revealed that the mean ratings of each of the individual standards was significantly different than the neutral response position. Table 1 summarizes the data from the teachers' rating of the student performance standards. Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine whether any discernible factors emerged from the 10 standards. Using the principal factor method with varimax rotation, all ten standards loaded on a single factor. This resulted in an eigenvalue of 4.8 and accounted for 90% of the possible variance. This justifies collapsing the individual responses to derive an overall attitude toward Goal 3 which can be used in subsequent analyses.

Table 1
Teacher Ratings of Student Performance Standards

		M	*SD*
1.	Florida students locate, comprehend, interpret, evaluate, maintain, and apply information, concepts, and ideas found in literature, the arts, symbols, recordings, video and other graphic displays, and computer files, in order to perform tasks and/or for enjoyment.	4.07	1.11
2.	Florida students communicate in English and other languages, using information, concepts, prose, symbols, reports, audio and video recordings, speeches, graphic displays, and computer-based programs.	4.26	0.85
3.	Florida students collect, describe, analyze, disaggregate, communicate, and synthesize numeric data to identify and solve problems.	4.24	0.88
4.	Florida students use creative thinking skills to generate new ideas, make the best decision, recognize and solve problems through reasoning, interpret symbolic data, and develop efficient techniques for lifelong learning.	4.41	0.82
5.	Florida students display social skills, self-management, responsibility, self-esteem, integrity , and honesty.	4.52	0.76
6.	Florida students will appropriately allocate time, money, materials, and other resources.	3.95	0.97
7.	Florida students integrate their knowledge and understanding of how broad-based systems work with their abilities to analyze trends, design solutions and apply technology to solve problems, invent new ideas, and understand the complex relationships among objects and events in their world.	4.14	0.95
8.	Florida students work cooperatively to successfully complete a project or activity.	4.27	0.86
9.	Florida students establish credibility with their colleagues through competence and integrity, and help their peers achieve their goals by communicating their feelings and ideas to justify or successfully negotiate a position which advances goal attainment.	4.02	1.02
10.	Florida students appreciate their own culture and the culture of others, understand the concerns and perspectives of members of other ethnic and gender groups, reject the stereotyping of themselves and others, and seek out and utilize the views of persons from diverse ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds while completing individual and group projects.	4.10	0.92

Note: Results are based on a 5 point scale: (1) "Not Important"- (5) "Extremely Important, Essential"

Attitude Toward Type of Assessment. The responses to the items measuring attitude toward standardized achievement test data and attitude toward performance-based assessment were first analyzed for internal consistency. The internal consistency analysis (Cronbach's alpha) confirmed previous findings that these measures demonstrate a high level of reliability (standardized achievement test data, r=.87; performance-assessment, r=.92). In summarizing the results for attitude toward standardized achievement testing, the mean response on a 5-point scale was 2.9 with a standard deviation of .75. For attitude toward performance based assessment, the average response was 3.2, with a standard deviation of .89. Both means were close to the neutral response position of 3.0. Other results from the assessment attitude surveys are depicted in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2
Attitude Toward Standardized Achievement Testing Data

		M	*SD*
1.	The use of test data does not help increase my job effectiveness.	3.12	1.29
2.	If additional test data were available I would utilize it in performing my job functions	2.88	1.21
3.	Test data is an important source of information for showing how a student will perform in class	2.83	1.16
4.	If more student data were available I would probably not use it.	2.86	1.27
5.	Student test data does not contribute significantly to the information I need to do my job.	2.87	1.28
6.	Students would benefit from educators having a greater availability of test data on individual students.	2.90	1.16
7.	When test data is discussed with others who are in a similar position as mine, it helps increase our job effectiveness.	2.94	1.18
8.	Test data is not important in my assessment of student performance.	2.87	1.32
9.	Test data is an essential source of information for me in performing my job functions.	2.69	1.26
10.	If additional test data were available I would not use it in the performance of my job duties.	2.94	1.21
11.	Time spent reviewing test data is well spent.	2.98	1.15
12.	I would decrease the amount of time involved in using test data.	3.18	1.09

Note: Results are based on a 5 point scale: (1) "Strongly Disagree" - (5) "Strongly Agree".
Numeric values are scaled to reflect a positive attitude toward testing data, i.e., negatively stated item response values were inverted.

Table 3
Attitude Toward Performance Based Assessment Results

		M	*SD*
1.	These types of assessments results are not very useful to me in performing my job functions.	3.42	1.30
2.	When teachers make effective use of such assessment results student instruction improves.	3.49	1.05
3.	If more of these types of assessment results were available I probably would not use them.	3.26	1.20
4.	More funds should be spent to make such assessments available.	2.74	1.27
5.	When such results are discussed with others who are in a similar position as mine, our job effectiveness increases.	3.35	1.07
6.	Any decision to spend additional funds for these types of assessments should be re-thought.	2.39	1.10
7.	Such assessments are an essential source of information for me in performing my job functions.	2.99	1.26
8.	Such assessment results should be reviewed and discussed by teachers and administrators to improve classroom instruction.	3.39	1.10
9.	These student assessment results do not contribute significantly to the information I need to do my job.	3.17	1.28
10.	Students would benefit from educators having a greater availability of such assessment results.	3.28	1.09

Note: Results are based on a 5 point scale: (1) "Strongly Disagree" - (5) "Strongly Agree".
Numeric values are scaled to reflect a positive attitude toward performance based assessment results, i.e., negatively stated item response values were inverted.

Correlates of Attitude Toward Student Performance Standards. To investigate the relationship between selected demographic and attitudinal variables with attitude toward the Goal 3 standards, a regression model was used the standards attitude variable as the dependent variable. The predictor variables and regression analysis data are displayed in Table 4. Only the performance based assessment attitude variable was significant in predicting Goal 3 attitude. ($F=7.36$, $p<.008$, $DF=77$). This represents a moderate relationship between these two variables ($r=.30$) with the resultant model accounting for about 8% of the total variance. None of the other variables proved significant for predicting the Goal 3 attitude.

Table 4
Predictor Variables Used in Regression Model

Variable	Correlation w/ Goal 3 Attitude		Regression		
	r	*p*	*B*	*T*	*p*
School Level (elementary, middle, high school)	0.10	0.176	0.05	0.439	0.662
Years of Teaching Experience	-0.05	0.327	-0.03	-0.283	0.778
Measurement Training (number of testing or measurement courses taken)	0.12	0.141	0.11	1.046	0.299
Participation in School Improvement (School Improvement Team membership)	0.04	0.352	0.03	0.308	0.759
Recertification Method (inservice points or university courses)	-0.20	0.035	-0.19	-1.786	0.078
Use of NCTM Standards (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics)	0.12	0.136	0.13	1.198	0.234
Attitude Toward Standardized Achievement Test Data	-0.01	0.470	-0.09	-0.829	0.410
Attitude Toward Performance Based Assessment Results	0.30	0.004	0.28	2.713	0.008

* Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) and probability value (p) for the correlation of each predictor variable with Attitude Toward Goal 3 Standards

** Results from applying the regression model: (B) Beta weight (standardized regression coefficient)

(*T*) statistic for measuring the relationship between the dependent and predictor variables

(*p*) probability value for T

Discussion

Results from the sample data show that teachers consider the Blueprint 2000 student performance standards to be important instructional objectives. Positive attitudes were reflected at all organizational levels. This is different from the findings of Hall and Tremmel, who found more negative attitudes among veteran and secondary level teachers. There are several plausible reasons for this difference: (1) Hall and Tremmel investigated attitude toward each goal. The current study measured attitude toward the Goal 3 standards. (2) Different districts were sampled. The school culture in each could be sufficiently different to produce dissimilar results. For example, inservice training may reflect varying degrees of emphasis on the reform issues. (3) The current study was

conducted a year later when teachers might have been more familiar with the reform efforts. Another finding of interest is that teachers were neither positive nor negative about information derived from standardized achievement tests or performance based assessments.

Some findings should be noted in relation to the internal and external factors depicted in the model developed for this study. Concerning internal factors, teachers expressed neutrality toward both forms of testing, standardized achievement testing and performance based assessment. A finding relative to an external factor revealed that a high level of group norm beliefs exists toward the Blueprint 2000 student performance standards.

The attempt at creating a regression model for predicting attitude towards the Goal 3 standards yielded only one mildly related variable, performance based assessment attitude. This is not surprising when one considers that much of the rhetoric supporting the basic instructional reform implied by the student performance standards is similar to the rationale for alternative, performance-based assessments (Resnick and Resnick, 1992).

Implications

The major finding that there are positive teacher attitudes toward a key element of Blueprint 2000 should be encouraging to those educators looking to implement this reform initiative. Results provide evidence that positive group norms exist at the high school, middle school, and elementary school levels for fostering change.

The purpose of this study was to develop a tool for assisting administrators in their quest for identifying individuals and groups supportive of current educational reform. Although the concept is so basic as to seem simplistic, identifying "pockets" of support would seem to be fundamental to the initial stages of educational reform. Attitude theory and research supports the process for identifying individuals (attitude components) within groups (normative beliefs) who would be most supportive of a particular reform effort. A future line of research could investigate the validation of a process for identifying schools for classification purposes.

A number of other benefits from using such a survey are possible: (1) Increasing the awareness of the staff regarding educational reform. Many teachers who were not familiar with the standards would now have an awareness of what instruction should emphasize. (2) Providing administrators with information on what their staff's beliefs are on key instructional issues. This information could assist in the decision making process when considering school based reform. (3) Providing information on potential support for school goals. This information could be used as part of the needs assessment process when developing school improvement goals. (4) Identifying which grade levels or departments within a school are most conducive to change. This would be helpful for targeting the subgroups that would provide the best environment for cultivating reform. Clearly, knowledge of teacher attitudes can greatly enhance reform efforts.

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